



Inside the Kentucky General Assembly

**Legislative
Research
Commission**



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June 2005

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LRC



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Foreword

When the first Kentucky General Assembly met in 1792, its members chose the term “commonwealth” to describe Kentucky. While there is no legal difference between a commonwealth and a state, Kentucky’s early leaders perhaps wanted to assert an independence of ideals and governance. By definition, a commonwealth is a political unit founded on law, united for the common good, and with supreme authority vested in the people. This ultimately defines Kentucky: government by the people and for the people.

Like most states, Kentucky has a part-time citizen legislature with members from diverse backgrounds and communities. All 138 members, however, serve year-round as legislators, representing constituents, helping them solve problems, and studying new ideas.

Of Kentucky’s three branches of government—executive, judicial, and legislative—the legislative is the one closest to the people and the one into which Kentuckians have the most direct input. Consequently, it is beneficial to both the legislature and our citizens that the work of the

General Assembly be understood and the legislative process be used to its full potential.

This publication has been prepared to help you better understand how your General Assembly conducts business during a legislative session.

Robert Sherman
Director

Legislative Research Commission
Frankfort, Kentucky
June 2005

The Legislature and the Constitution

Kentucky originally was a county of Virginia when its citizens petitioned to become a separate political entity. On

June 1, 1792, Kentucky became the 15th state.

The first General Assembly, with 21 members, met in 1792 in Lexington to form a state government.

Frankfort was chosen as the state capital in part because of geography: it sits on the

Kentucky River and was nearly the central point of the state's population. Frankfort also donated land and building materials. The General Assembly has met in Frankfort since 1793. The legislature has met in the current Capitol building since 1910.

Kentucky changed rapidly during its early years as a state as its population increased dramatically. More people meant an increased need for an organized and evolving government. The first Kentucky Constitution was adopted in 1792.

Seven short, but busy, years later that document was revised, and a new constitution was approved in 1799; a third was adopted in 1850; and the fourth (the current) was adopted in 1891.

Throughout history, the Constitution also has been amended by the people to address specific issues.



March 21, 1914, Kentucky repealed all laws relating to child labor and made it illegal for any child younger than 14 to work during school hours.

The state's Constitution provides for three branches of government: legislative, judicial, and executive. The legislative branch enacts laws; the judicial branch interprets laws; and the executive branch administers laws. In addition to making the state's laws, the legislature also enacts a state budget and levies taxes.

Legislative Sessions

Regular Sessions

Kentucky's Constitution requires the General Assembly to meet in Frankfort every year on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January.

Even-numbered Years

- Begin January
- Number of legislative days*
not more than 60
- End no later than April 15

Odd-numbered Years

- Part 1 – Organizational
Component – Begin January
- Part 2 – Begin first
Tuesday in February
- Number of legislative days*
not more than 30
- End no later than March 30

* A legislative day is a calendar day with the exception of Sundays, legal holidays, and any day on which neither chamber meets.



January 26, 1882,
Kentucky allowed
African Americans
to serve on juries.

Extraordinary (Special) Sessions

Only the governor may call a special session and it may only address subjects specified in the governor's call. Though only the governor may call a special session, it is the legislature that determines the process and decides when the session will end. Although there is no time limit on special sessions, they are usually brief.

Districts

Kentucky follows a bicameral form of government consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives. Legislators are elected by the citizens of their designated legislative area—district—to be their voice in government. The Constitution requires the General Assembly to divide the state into 38 Senate districts and 100 House districts as nearly equal in population as possible. The General Assembly must review the districts at least every 10 years and reddivide them if necessary.

Senators

The Constitution establishes terms and qualifications for legislators. A senator must be at least 30

years old, a citizen of Kentucky, and must have lived in the state at least six years immediately preceding an election. A senator must live in the district for at least one year prior to election. Senators are elected for four-year terms, with half the Senate elected every two years.

Representatives

A representative must be at least 24 years old, a citizen of Kentucky, and must have lived in the state for at least two years and in the district for one year prior to election. Representatives are elected for two-year terms, with the entire House elected every two years.

Leadership

The leadership of the Senate and House are defined by both the Constitution and by the legislative traditions of the General Assembly. The Constitution requires that members of the Senate elect a President and that members of the House elect a Speaker. The members of each chamber also elect a President Pro Tempore and a Speaker Pro Tempore.

The traditions of the legislature allow for the members to elect additional legislative leaders—floor leaders, caucus chairs, and whips—who are selected by their political parties' caucuses during the



January 6, 1920, the General Assembly ratified the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women the right to vote.

organizational phase of odd-year sessions. These leaders are responsible for seeing that the interests of their respective party caucuses are served.



March 14, 1878, Kentucky became the third state in the nation to establish a State Board of Health.

Constitutional Officers

The Constitution also mandates a number of constitutional officers to carry out some of the clerical and support activities for the General Assembly. Among these are the chief clerks elected by each chamber.

The clerks and their staffs, assisted by the staff of the Legislative Research Commission, are responsible for recording the minutes of each session, roll calls and votes, and bill calendars; recording committee assignments; certifying the passage of bills and resolutions; keeping equipment inventories; and keeping the official *Journal* of each chamber.

Clerks and LRC staff see that amendments are incorporated into bills before they go from one chamber to the other. They also make sure that final copies signed by the presiding officer in each chamber contain the exact wording approved by the House and Senate.

The sergeants-at-arms clear unauthorized persons from the floor of the House and Senate before each session and as otherwise directed. They also clear the galleries if there is a disturbance.

The Legislative Process

Standing Committees

Standing committees play a vital role in the legislative process. Both the House and the Senate are organized into separate standing committees to facilitate the most efficient use of time and resources while considering individual pieces of legislation. Each legislator is assigned to serve on at least one standing committee. These committees collectively may consider more than 1,000 pieces of legislation during a session and decide which should advance to the full House or Senate. In each chamber, the Committee on Committees assigns bills to one of its several standing committees. Assignments are determined by the subject of each bill. Rules adopted at the beginning of the organizational session list subjects that fall within each committee's jurisdiction.

The Committee on Committees also selects the chair, vice chair, and members of each standing committee.

The chair of each committee, in consultation with leadership, determines which and in what order bills will be considered. A committee may schedule a public hearing on the subject before acting on specific legislation. Supporters and opponents of a particular bill are often invited to address a committee.

Committees may send bills to the full House or Senate for consideration with or without proposing changes (amendments) to the bill.

Bills may also be retained in the House or Senate committee.

Approximately half the bills introduced each session never get out of committee.

Order of Business

The exact order of business varies slightly between the Senate and the House of Representatives. Both chambers follow Parliamentary procedure for conducting business.

Below is a typical day's chamber proceedings.



- **Invocation**

Each day begins with a prayer. At the beginning of each legislative session, resolutions are adopted inviting area ministers to offer the invocation.

March 15, 1898, Kentucky became one of the nation's leaders in the pure-food movement by enacting laws to regulate the manufacture and sale of food.

- **Pledge of Allegiance**

- **Roll Call**

The clerk calls the roll to see if the constitutionally required number of members are present to transact business.

- **Reading and Approval of the *Journal***

A motion is usually made that the reading of the

previous day's actions (the *Journal*) be dispensed with and approved.

- **Introduction and Reading of New Bills and Resolutions**

The clerk numbers bills and resolutions as they are received and reads new ones by title and sponsor. Bills and resolutions are identified by number throughout their consideration.

- **Report of Referrals of Bills to Committees**

The clerk announces to which standing committees bills have been referred by the Committee on Committees.

- **Report of Committees**

The clerk reads committee action on bills.

- **First Reading of Bills**

The Constitution requires all bills be "read" on three separate days. These bills are read by title only.

A favorable committee report constitutes the first reading of a bill. Bills that have received a first reading are placed on the Calendar for the following day.



March 24, 1908, the General Assembly passed legislation that every county would be a school district and each would have a public high school.

- **Second Reading of Bills**

Bills on the Calendar are given their second reading, by title only, and sent to the Rules Committee.

- **Third Reading and Passage of Bills**

It is usually the majority floor leader who makes a motion that a bill be given its third reading, by title only, to open the floor for debate on the bill.



March 29, 1902, the General Assembly created the Kentucky State Fair.

- **Motions, Petitions, and Communications**

A member may present any matter he or she wishes to have considered that can be appropriately characterized as a motion, petition, or communication.

- **Orders of the Day**

The Rules Committee posts legislation in the Orders of the Day. The majority floor leader calls bills from the Orders of the Day for debate, amendment, or other floor action.

- **Announcements**

Committee chairs call meetings of their committees and members make any announcements they have.

• **Adjournment**

The presiding officer asks if there is any further business. If not, upon motion, the chamber adjourns.



March 23, 1920, the General Assembly passed a law requiring motor-vehicle registration and licensing of vehicle operators.

Adjourning and Convening

Each chamber decides individually every day it is in session when to adjourn and when to convene for the next working day.

Chamber Decorum

The rules of each chamber state that members are not to address each other on the floor by name. Senators must refer to each other as, "The senator from (a particular county or district)." House members refer to their colleagues as, "The gentleman (or lady) from...." Senators address the presiding officer as "Mr. (or Madam) President"; and House members, "Mr. (or Madam) Speaker."

Members who use objectionable language on the floor may be called to order by the chair.

Bills

Only a member of the General Assembly can introduce legislation. Legislators, however, often introduce bills suggested by citizens or various organizations.

Bills vary in length from a single paragraph to hundreds of pages. The Constitution requires that a bill relate to only one subject, which must be stated in the title. Bills that do not follow this rule may be ruled unconstitutional. The Constitution prohibits special laws applying only to one city, town, county, or person.

All bills must begin with the words: “Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.”

Some bills pass with few changes (amendments) and little discussion. Others are subjected to intense examination and undergo major changes before becoming law. Amendments may be proposed by a committee or a legislator, but amendments must be approved by the full House or Senate before they are incorporated into the bill. If a committee changes a bill significantly, a committee substitute may be adopted. Once adopted, a committee substitute is considered as the original bill for purposes of further amendment.

Bills are introduced by legislators delivering them to the Senate or House Clerk.

Below is the basic process a bill must follow to be enacted into law (Kentucky Revised Statutes):



March 17, 1914, the General Assembly created the Kentucky Illiteracy Commission.

- **Introduction and Committee Referral**



A bill may be introduced in the Senate or House. However, a bill that raises revenue must be introduced in the House. Each bill is assigned a number, read by title and

November 1949, Carolyn Conn Moore of Franklin became the first woman elected to the Senate.

sponsor, and referred to a standing committee by the Committee on Committees.

- **Committee Consideration**

Committee meetings are open to the public except when exempted by the Open Meetings Law. When there is sufficient interest in a subject, a public hearing may be held. A bill may be reported out of committee with one of the following expressions of opinion: favorable; favorable with committee amendments; favorable with committee substitute; unfavorable; or, in the Senate, without opinion. A committee can essentially kill a bill by failing to act on it.

- **First Reading**

When a committee reports a bill favorably, the bill has its first reading and is placed on the Calendar for the following day.

- **Second Reading; To Rules**

The bill is read by title a second time and sent to the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee may recommit the bill (send it back to a committee) or

place it in the Orders of the Day for consideration.

• **Third Reading and Passage**

"I move that House Bill 100 be taken from its place in the Orders of the Day, read for the third time by title only, and placed upon its passage." This motion, usually made by the majority floor leader, opens the floor for debate. Following debate and amendments, a final vote on the bill is taken. To pass, a bill must be approved by at least two-fifths of the members of the chamber (40 representatives or 16 senators) and a majority of the members present and voting. If the bill contains an appropriation or an emergency clause, it must be approved by a majority of the members elected to each chamber (51 representatives and 20 senators). During sessions in odd-numbered years, legislation that appropriates funds or raises revenue requires a three-fifths majority to pass. Proposed constitutional amendments also require a three-fifths majority to pass.

• **What Happens Next?**

If a bill is defeated, that is the end of it unless two members who voted against it request it be reconsidered and the request is approved by majority vote. If a bill passes one chamber, it is sent to the other chamber, where it follows much the same procedure. Both chambers must agree on the final form of each bill. If either chamber fails to concur in amendments made by the other, the differences may be reconciled by a conference committee of senators and representatives. Compromises agreed to by this

conference committee must be approved by both chambers.

- **Enrollment**

After passage by both chambers, a bill is presented for signature by the enrollment committee. The bill is signed by the presiding officer of each chamber and sent to the governor (or Secretary of State if a constitutional amendment).

- **Governor's Action**

The governor may sign a bill, permit it to become law without signing it, or veto it. A veto may be overridden by a majority of the members of both chambers. Kentucky's governor must veto a bill in its entirety, except for an appropriations bill, for which the governor has line-item veto authority. The governor has 10 days (excluding Sundays) to act on a bill after it has been received.

- **Becoming law**

The Constitution specifies that an act becomes law 90 days after the General Assembly adjourns, unless the act contains a delayed effective date or an emergency clause. In the latter case, the act must be approved by a constitutional majority (half of the members elected, plus one) and becomes effective immediately upon its approval by the governor.

The fastest a bill can pass through both chambers of the General Assembly and receive the required three readings in both is five days. Most bills take longer to complete the process, however.

Bill Status

During a session, citizens can call the toll-free bill status line for legislative updates. The telephone number is posted on the LRC Web site during sessions and is also published across the state by the media.



February 16, 1838, the General Assembly created the state's first system of free public education.

Resolutions and Citations

In addition to bills, the General Assembly may express itself in resolutions or in citations.

Simple resolutions require action by only one chamber and do not carry the force of law. They most often are used to express the sense of the chamber on a particular matter. Frequently, at the end of a day, the Senate or House will pass a simple resolution to adjourn in honor or memory of an individual or group.

Concurrent resolutions adopted by both chambers generally are used to mandate specific legislative studies and to send messages to other branches of government. They also do not have the force of law.

A joint resolution is used to ratify amendments to the U.S. Constitution, to direct an executive-branch agency to conduct a study, or to approve other matters of temporary law not meant to be inserted in the statutes, such as naming roads and bridges. Joint resolutions have the force of law and must pass both chambers, be signed by

the officers of each chamber, be sent to the governor, and be filed with the Secretary of State.

Legislative citations can be presented by either chamber to recognize an individual or group. Because citations are honorary, they generally are not to be used for procedural, controversial, or partisan political matters.

Legislative Research Commission



The Legislative Research Commission was created in 1948 as a nonpartisan fact-finding and service agency. Under Chapter

LRC was created in 1948 by the General Assembly.

7 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes, the Commission operates as the administrative and research arm of the General Assembly. The Commission also directs the business of the legislature between sessions of the General Assembly.

The Legislative Research Commission is a 16-member statutory committee made up of the majority and minority party leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House serve as co-chairs of LRC. The Commission employs a Director who serves at its pleasure. The LRC Director supervises the nonpartisan staff of the Commission and the General Assembly.

The term “Legislative Research Commission” is also typically used to refer to legislative staff, which is comprised of two units: a larger non-partisan staff and a smaller partisan staff. The nonpartisan professional support staff is hired by the LRC Director and serves all 138 members of the legislature. Partisan staff serves the legislative leadership of either chamber and serves at their pleasure.

The structural work of the Legislative Research Commission is performed by committees. There are three types of LRC committees, which are also considered to be subcommittees of the Legislative Research Commission: interim joint committees, statutory committees, and special committees/task forces. These committees are staffed by LRC nonpartisan professional staff.

Interim Joint Committees

Interim Joint Committees are an important part of the legislative process. Many consider the establishment of the interim joint committee system as a major reason that the legislative branch has achieved co-equal status with the other branches of Kentucky state government.

The period between legislative sessions is called the “interim,” and a great deal of legislative business continues at this time. During the interim,



LRC is the nonpartisan fact-finding and service body of the General Assembly.

the individual Senate and House standing committees that were organized during the session meet together as interim joint committees. For example, the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Revenue and the House Standing Committee on Appropriations and Revenue become the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue after a legislative session.

The interim joint committee system enables continued study and in-depth discussion of issues after a legislative session during the period leading to the next session. It lends a degree of continuity to the operation of the Kentucky legislature. An interim joint committee may prepare, review, and “prefile” legislation. Prefiled legislation is introduced on the first day of the next regular session and assists standing committees in becoming active immediately as that session begins.

The legislative interim period has been statutorily defined to begin on June 1 and continue through December 1 of each year. Interim joint committee meetings are open to the public. Citizen participation in these meetings is encouraged.



The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House serve as co-chairs of LRC.

Statutory Committees



Statutory committees were established by the General Assembly (by statute) to perform specific tasks related to oversight of the executive branch of state government.

The Commission directs the business of the legislature between sessions of the General Assembly.

Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee

The Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee reviews regulations proposed by state administrative bodies. After review by the subcommittee, the Legislative Research Commission refers proposed regulations to an appropriate interim joint committee for further review.

Capital Planning Advisory Board

The Capital Planning Advisory Board develops in each biennium a comprehensive statewide six-year capital improvements plan and submits it to the heads of the three branches of government. The plan includes recommendations of projects to be undertaken or continued and recommendations as to priority and means of funding capital projects. The board is composed of 16 members appointed by the three branches of state government.

Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee

The Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee monitors implementation of capital projects authorized by the General Assembly or by the committee through an interim review process.

The committee reviews any cost overruns on authorized projects and receives quarterly

reports from those agencies that manage capital projects. The committee also reviews all bonds issued by state agencies and school systems.



LRC employs a nonpartisan Director to oversee staff.

Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee

The Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee reviews administrative regulations and advises the Kentucky Board of Education concerning the implementation of the state system of assessment and accountability.

The subcommittee also advises and monitors the Office of Education Accountability, which was established by the 1990 General Assembly's passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act.

Government Contract Review Committee

The Government Contract Review Committee reviews proposed state personal service con-

tracts and memoranda of agreement to determine the need for the service, whether the service can be performed by state personnel, and the cost and duration of the contract.

Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Committee


The Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Committee monitors the implementation of Medicaid Managed Care within the Commonwealth, including access to services, utilization of services, quality of services, and cost containment.

Program Review and Investigations Committee

The Program Review and Investigations Committee reviews the

operations of state

agencies to determine that funds are being spent appropriately and if state programs are implemented effectively by the executive branch. The operations, practices, and duties of state agencies are studied as they relate to efficiency in the utilization of space, personnel, equipment, and facilities. The committee reports its findings to the state agency involved and to the General Assembly.



Partisan staff serve the legislative leadership of either chamber and serve at their pleasure.

Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee

The Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee reviews each project being submitted to the Agricultural Development Board for funding from the Tobacco Settlement Fund.

Special Committees/ Task Forces

When necessary, the Legislative Research Commission or the General Assembly authorizes special committees or task forces to study a specific topic and report their findings, usually by a specified date during the interim, to LRC or the General Assembly. As such, these committees are temporary in nature. After the study has been completed and reported, the special committee or task force ceases to exist.

LRC Nonpartisan Professional Support Staff

LRC employs a nonpartisan Director who oversees a nonpartisan professional staff of bill drafters; committee administrators, analysts, and assistants; researchers; fiscal analysts; attorneys; economists; librarians;



Nonpartisan staff serve the entire legislature and report to the LRC Director.

secretaries; computer technicians; and other trained specialists who provide a multitude of services for the General Assembly.

The nonpartisan staff also prints bills, research reports, and informational bulletins in its own print shop; maintains official legislative records and provides research materials in its Legislative Reference Library; dispenses information to the media and the public about the activities of the General Assembly and its members through its Public Information Office; and maintains a Web site for Internet access by the public to the General Assembly.

Functions of the LRC Nonpartisan Committee Staff

Major responsibilities of the LRC committee staff are bill drafting, research, and committee meeting facilitation.

Bill Drafting

Nonpartisan LRC staff draft legislation at the request of any legislative member. Bill draft requests are assigned to a member of the staff of the standing or interim joint committee that has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the request. Staff draft legislation both during legislative sessions for consideration during that session and during the interim periods between regular sessions for introduction at the next session.

Research

A major responsibility of LRC is to research issues confronting lawmakers. These research tasks and projects are completed by nonpartisan LRC staff at the request of the General Assembly, the Legislative



The “interim” is the time between regular sessions of the General Assembly.

Research Commission, an LRC subcommittee, or an individual legislator and can encompass any state program or policy. Any resulting research reports and research memoranda are made available to the public at little or no cost. Research publications are among the holdings of the LRC Legislative Reference Library and many also are available on the LRC Web site.

Committee Meeting Facilitation

There are four types of committees. Senate and House standing committees are creatures of the General Assembly and exist during legislative sessions only. Interim joint committees, statutory committees, and special committees/task forces are considered subcommittees of the Legislative Research Commission. LRC nonpartisan staff are assigned to and facilitate meetings for all of these types of committees. Meeting facilitation includes, but is not limited to, scheduling meetings and coordinating agendas in consultation with committee chairs, arranging testimony from witnesses, preparing background materials for use by committee members, and preparing and distributing committee reports and minutes.

Budget Review

LRC is directed by statute to study and examine the expenditures of state agencies. For this purpose, the Commission has a budget review staff that examines agency budgets, conducts fiscal studies, and provides data required for effective legislative review of budget proposals. During General Assembly sessions, budget review staff prepare fiscal notes on the cost implications of pending legislation. The principal function of this staff is to work with the Appropriations and Revenue Committees in formulating the state budget.

Office of Education Accountability

The legislature established the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) in 1990 as part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. OEA is under the jurisdiction of the Legislative Research Commission with oversight by its Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee (EAARS).

OEA is required to ensure that public schools in Kentucky operate efficiently and effectively. OEA also monitors the implementation of education reform throughout the state and reviews the state's system of school finance. OEA conducts studies relating to public education as directed by EAARS.



March 16, 1920, the General Assembly created the Department of State Roads and Highways.

Contacting Legislators

Letters

Receiving letters from constituents is an effective way for legislators to learn the support of or opposition to issues. It is helpful for letters to specifically identify the bill supported or opposed. A letter should discuss only one issue, if possible. The name and mailing address of the letter writer should be included. The names and mailing addresses of legislators may be obtained on the LRC Web page or by contacting the LRC Public Information Office.



February 6, 1904, the General Assembly approved the construction of a new capitol building. It was dedicated in 1910 and is the current Capitol.

Telephone

A legislator's office may be contacted any time during normal business hours by calling LRC at (502) 564-8100.

People with hearing or speech impairments may use the toll-free Kentucky Relay Service by calling 1-800-648-6056.

LRC sets up toll-free telephone numbers for citizens to use to leave a message for legislators and to determine meeting schedules. During legislative sessions, additional toll-free numbers are made available to determine the status of a bill or to access a Spanish-language operator.

These numbers are posted on the LRC Web page and are publicized across the state by the media.

E-mail

All legislators have e-mail addresses that can be accessed on the LRC Web page at <lrc.ky.gov>.

Planning a Visit

Legislative leadership offices are on the third floor of the Capitol near the chambers in which they serve. All legislators have offices in the Capitol Annex.

Visitors are welcome at the Capitol any time. Legislators are very busy, and it is a good idea to let them know in advance about a planned visit to Frankfort. If visiting without advance notice, leave a message for them at the office of the House Clerk, Senate Clerk, or the Legislative Offices in the Capitol Annex.

To keep informed about legislation of interest during a session, copies of the bills are available for a nominal charge in the Public Bill Room in the Capitol basement or on the LRC Web site.

Whenever there is a committee meeting, a schedule is posted on the Web site and on bulletin boards located throughout the



March 15, 1894, married women in Kentucky obtained the right to hold real and personal property in their own name after they were married.

Capitol and the Capitol Annex. The number of observers at committee meetings is limited only by rules of the state fire marshal.

Protocol

A few other rules should be observed when visiting the General Assembly:

- There should be no applause or loud talking in the chamber galleries or in committee rooms.

- Please do not take food or drinks into the galleries or when touring the building. There is a snack area in the basement of the Capitol and a cafeteria

and a snack shop in the Capitol Annex.

- No posters, banners, or signs are allowed in the committee rooms or hallways of the Capitol or the Capitol Annex.

- No visitors are permitted on the floor when the House of Representatives and Senate are in session except by special invitation from a legislator.

- Smoking is prohibited in public areas of the Capitol and the Capitol Annex.



January 1936, Charles W. Anderson, Jr. of Louisville became the first African American to serve in the House of Representatives.

Information Desks

An information desk is located on the first floor at the north entrance of the Capitol. Guides conduct tours that offer a historical perspective of the building and familiarize visitors with current activity. During sessions, information desks also are located on the third floor of the Capitol.

Handicap Access

The Capitol and Capitol Annex are handicap accessible; however, the chamber galleries are not. Accommodations can be made for those visitors who cannot manage the steps to the chamber galleries. Please let the staff of the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate know if special accommodations are needed.

On the Web

LRC hosts a Web site at <lrc.ky.gov> that contains information on members, committees, the legislative process, contacting legislators, bill status, legal research tools, and available publications.



February 7, 1912, the General Assembly approved the construction of a “Governor’s Mansion.”

The Kentucky Historical Society provided the information for the General Assembly history boxes.



Legislative Research Commission

700 Capital Ave., Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-8100 lrc.ky.gov